GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:229
ANSWERED ON:16.12.2004
DIRECT TO HOME BROADCASTING POLICY
Saradgi Shri Iqbal Ahmed

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Direct to Home (DTH) broadcasting policy is likely to be revived;

(b) if so, whether a committee headed by Information and Broadcasting Secretary was set up for a fresh look into DTH;

(c) if so, whether the committee was asked to focus on content related issues;

(d) if so, whether the committee has submitted its Report;

(e) if so, how many recommendations thereof have been accepted and implemented; and

(f) the extent to which the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India wants to make it mandatory for TV channels to give their content to all DTH providers on a non discriminatory basis?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING AND CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY)

(a) to (f): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (f) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.229 FOR ANSWER ON 16TH DECEMBER, 2004.

(a) to (e): The Government prescribed DTH guidelines for permitting DTH service in India on 15th March, 2001. These guidelines are available on this Ministry`s website (www.mib.nic.in). Currently, there is no proposal to review these guidelines.

A Public Interest Litigation (PIL) was filed before the Delhi High Court by Dr. N. Bhaskar Rao before Delhi High Court, expressing concerns regarding the possible misuse of DTH service for viewing pornographic channels and its susceptibility to misuse for secret/anti national messaging. The matter was examined in the Ministry in the month of August 2004, and the concerns raised in the PIL were discussed in a meeting convened by Secretary (I&B) with representatives from concerned Ministries. It was further decided to constitute a committee under the Chairmanship of Joint Secretary (Broadcasting) in this Ministry to examine various possibilities of breach of security through messaging particularly in the context of the situation in J&K and North-East. This committee examined security concerns and concluded that Government could set up its own monitoring station for the purposes of monitoring not only the DTH services but also the satellite beams receivable in India in other bands. Accordingly Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Ltd., a Public Sector Undertaking under the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting has been asked to prepare a detailed proposal.

(f): TRAI on 10th December 2004, has notified `The Telecommunication

(Broadcasting and Cable Services) Interconnection Regulation, 2004, which contains, inter alia, general provisions relating to Non-Discrimination in Interconnect Agreements. A copy of this Regulation is available on TRAI`s website (http://www.trai.gov.in). Para 3.2 of the Regulation lays down that every broadcaster shall provide on request signals of its TV channels on non- discriminatory terms to all distributors of TV channels including Direct-To-Home Operator.